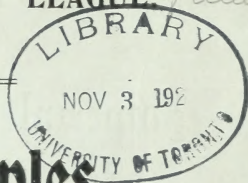


IMPERIAL FEDERATION LEAGUE. *of Australia*



The Principles
of
Alliance and Federation
Contrasted.

— By —

E. MORRIS MILLER,

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Imperial Federation League.

OBJECTS OF THE LEAGUE :

1. *To Maintain the Unity of the British Dominions.*
2. *To Strengthen it in the future by SOME FORM OF FEDERATION.*

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION :

No sum has been fixed as the Subscription to the League. Each Member fixes the amount of his annual contribution for himself, and this may be forwarded to the Hon. Treasurer, "Hallatrow," Kew. The League is not responsible for the opinions of Individual Members.

“THE PRINCIPLES OF ALLIANCE AND FEDERATION CONTRASTED.”

Alliances are more or less loose and disjointed. They are, in fact, sorts of makeshifts, unstable in form and tolerated at the convenience of the contracting parties. Usually they are hard to bring about, but very easy to break. Under any form of alliance there is no real binding unity at all. What is regarded as the unity is a bare abstraction into which the differences of the conforming states momentarily vanish. Such a union cannot be expansive. Its character, to all intents and purposes, is negative. It allows free play for all kinds of jealousies, and these are controlled only so long as the self-interests of all are guaranteed by the conditions of the alliance. Immediately anything disadvantageous to any one of the contracting peoples arises the covenant weakens. Such agreements cannot be lasting, for they are in the nature of things artificial, being merely forced upon the parties by the fortuity of circumstances.

A form of union of this description could not serve the best aims of Empire, inasmuch as it lacks the constraint that is necessary to a true inward oneness. If alliance is to be the ruling principle of Imperial unity, then there would be no discretionary power exercised anywhere in the Empire except such as would only suffice for the particular requirements of a given moment. With this occasional exception the states would go on in their own way, unimpeded by a central pressure, and would but come together for certain gains that would likely accrue from co-operation in action in regard to peculiar circumstances arising from time to time. Each state would have isolated ideals, and when these aims clashed the alliance would be the first to suffer shock.

These bonds also are exceedingly weak in self-sacrifice for a higher good. They are mainly determined by selfish ends. Where there is no purely self-advantage, there is no alliance. The relations between the states in these

cases are external only, and last so long as they are of value for the special interests of each party. This sort of union does not get down to, nor spring from, the soul of a people. It fails to express their aspirations with sufficient adequacy and but temporarily allays their national differences. Now, it is in the very distinctiveness of each of the constituent parts that the strength and vitality of the British Empire manifest themselves. Because the people are conscious of the constraining influences of the unity that binds them, they seek to resolve their differences, and find in them a sphere for their activities. The demand for their resolution keeps the various portions at one in their common endeavour to overcome the obstacles in their way, and so strong are the restraints of their community of purposes that they never go beyond the limits which their unity requires. Here, then, mere selfish interests are ruled out. We, as Imperialists, know ourselves as striving for more than sordid gain. The majesty of Empire is with us as a religious sentiment, Lord Curzon recently maintained. It operates in our midst unspent. Its energy is being continually renewed, reinfused with fresh gleams of advancing thought. These facts would not obtain satisfactory explanation in an alliance as generally accepted. They spring from a unity deeper than the nations of the Empire themselves, and it is this oneness, which is already here, that we must resolve to explicate and understand.

The latter conclusion has forced many ardent Imperialists to the path of Federation, but amongst them there are divergencies of opinions as to means and ends. Some advocate a grand supreme Imperial Parliament as the ultimate goal; others devote their attention to the constitution of an Advisory Committee or Imperial Council; and yet in the midst of their differences they all strenuously uphold the principle that the new form must be an additional responsibility on the states concerned, and must not in any way infringe their present rights and powers. But even these gentlemen do not refrain from the usage of the word alliance in the elucidation of their aims. W. E. Forster maintained that for Imperial union one condition was absolutely necessary—mutual alliance with common citizenship. He constantly referred to his ideal as a consolidated alliance. Jehu Matthews, of Canada, considered federation as equivalent to a permanent alliance. Non-federalists also qualify their idea of alliance by such epithets as "close," "intimate," "co-operative," and so forth. The fact that both federalists and non-federalists use the same term in

many cases with but slightly varying shades of meaning in conveying their ideas on Imperial destiny, is a striking manifestation of the unity in us, which, so far, is very vaguely expressed. They unanimously wish to preserve intact the current rights of all, but the question is—Under what form will these be best preserved? Must dismembership come first—a complete change in the present status,—a full recognition of the independence of the constituent states, and then a further building up on the basis of an alliance? Or must we superimpose on the numerous forms of government a brand-new one, such as a pure federation would sanction? Or must we not rather work out our destiny from the present standpoint, making the necessary alterations which are required from time to time, as our common purposes become more and more manifest?

In his enlightening work on "Colonial Nationalism," Mr. Richard Jebb (a) inclines to the view that the higher union of the Empire must take the form of an alliance of independent nations, constituting themselves as imperial partners in carrying on the administration of subject communities under their mutual control. The strength of the partnership or Imperial alliance would be found in the resolve to fulfil a common imperial duty, which would operate above and beyond mere defensive or commercial interests, aye, and even the sentiments of blood and tradition themselves. Mr. Jebb certainly does not regard alliance in the ordinary acceptation of that term. In his estimation it is clothed upon with the responsibilities of an imperial mission, the significance of which is yet to be more fully disclosed. Indeed, it is just in the unfolding of this supreme mission of Empire that the real dangers to Imperial unity lie. Herein is involved that "magnificent speculation" (as he calls it), the policy of a collective imperialism, which is offered as an alternative to eventual disruption and national isolation. Our President is the author of the phrase, "collective imperialism," but I doubt whether he would attribute to it all the virtues which reveal themselves to Mr. Jebb. To this thinker it is a matter for speculation whether the growing nations of the Empire will find their national interests best served by an alliance whose ultimate sanction is the sense of a common duty in the administration of dependencies, for he fears that this idea of partnership in a mutually-recognised imperial obligation may not

(a) Mr. Deakin draws attention to late utterances of Mr. Jebb, to which these references would not apply. At the same time, we in Australia are indebted to Mr. Jebb for the noble stand he has taken in regard to current feeling in the dominions.

grow with sufficient rapidity to keep pace with the development of nationalism in the various states. To allay any disintegrating tendencies of this kind he would urge the immediate resolution of such matters as reciprocity and preferential trade, maritime communication and emigration. He is very emphatic in his conclusion that the nationalisms of Canada, Australia, and South Africa are separative tendencies, and that they must be counter-balanced by the superimposition of an Imperial alliance sanctioned by a mutual duty to inferior races under their joint control. An Australian nationalist will find in Mr. Jebb's views many things that are commendable, and he will rejoice in the ideas of an imperial partnership and common obligations. This is what he seeks and demands, but it is questionable whether Mr. Jebb has obtained the true basis for the conclusions he arrives at. He pays far too much heed to what he called "centrifugal tendencies," without sufficiently regarding the position of that centre from whose constraint they are supposed to flee. Further, his case is based upon too many negative assertions, and thus it necessarily loses a great deal of its force and weight.

In the light of old and worn-out theories of Colonial Government the current tendencies in Canada and Australia may truly be looked upon as centrifugal; but those ideas do not obtain at the present time in anything like the manner they were once wont to do. And even if the nationalism of the larger states is viewed as breaking away from the dominance of "official imperialism," we still find them, by their own very strength itself, realising a unity far more comprehensive and effective than what has prevailed hitherto. We notice that Imperial questions in their local aspects are constituting themselves as spheres of campaign for the great parties in the several states. A spirit of unity is abroad conscious of its developmental energy, and in the midst of warring factions it is endeavouring to body forth its common purpose and hope. Because there is a unity actually present with us, we are enabled to see and trace the national distinctiveness in the constituent states. There can be no common nationality in the limited sense of the term, but there may be an Imperial citizenship, which will yet grow more powerful, more abiding, more prevailing. Once it has been established in strength, it shall stand fast against all disintegrating forces. The tendencies of the moment are assuredly federal, and we do not need the breakage of which Mr. Jebb speaks as an intermediary towards union. Present-day influences show us that the Empire is not struggling after a unity which

is to be the outcome of external services which it may render to mankind, nor of the pressure which strained relations and circumstance are presumed to be effecting; nay, rather they show that Imperial unity is already a fact, and that the intensity of the endeavour to express and explain it constitutes the real difficulties of Empire. We feel ourselves exercising our privileges under the constraining guidance of a oneness that we cannot disown. We put up with many inconveniences, many infringements of our desires, so that the bond may not be unduly strained. This conviction makes the idea of mere alliance as the basis of unity seem hollow and poor. The binding principle operates now. We are one, but our oneness is but partially understood. No unity is ever fully resolved into its constituents. It is the never-ending enterprise of men ever to be giving new forms and new sanctions to those principles that preserve and set forth their common faith and aspirations. In our Australian federation we have a principle of unity far more deeply interfused amongst our people than that obtaining among merely allied states. It has a firmness that we cannot control—except in the use of it for the embodiment of the national consciousness. This is the true note of any federalism, and it is this power that every form of alliance lacks. Why, then, should it not be so with this Empire? Are we to be the petty playthings of geographical divisions and racial distinctions? Shall we as a people fail to rise above these things? Is it not rather in keeping with our Imperial destiny to grasp the meaning of these differences, and determine that they shall yet find their solution in making for the consummation of an Empire citizenship? The upholders of an Imperial union based upon the alliance of the nations forming the Empire do not sufficiently attend to this spirit of unity that obtains in our midst. So long as this Imperial oneness is felt, even though it be but vaguely, there is no necessity to make for any form of disintegration in order that we might rebuild upon an artificial foundation. The true and sure way is to make those advances which will explicate the awkward expressions of unity which are dominating us to-day, and for this service we each and all require to cultivate in the presence of difficulties that Imperial patience which rests on the sure hope of eventual justification.

Mr. Jebb is not correct in imagining that the only alternative to an Imperial alliance is a form of federation which demands the construction of one supreme Parliament, specially controlling all the affairs of a non-local character. Indeed, he treats the whole position of

Imperial Federation as though it actually involved some sort of unification in which the independent position of the sister states would become dwarfed and stunted. This is far from being acceptable to Imperial Federalists—even to those who would support the institution of a higher Legislature. Sir Frederick Young, who is one of the staunchest defenders of this form of Imperial Government, would even agree to each state being permitted to develop its own foreign policy unimpeded, provided that the wider interests of the whole were not disregarded. Mr. B. Holland, whom we may fairly call an Imperial Federalist, believes that one supreme Parliament as the source of unity is impossible. He inclines to the view that the federal principle will take the form of a confederation of states, held together by the union of each to the same crown, and he further states that the way of advance lies in the creation of an Imperial Council, advising the Crown, and acting as a medium between the confederated states.

Although Mr. R. B. Haldane adopts a critical attitude towards the once predominant ideas underlying Imperial Federation, yet he, too, may be accounted a federalist in the sense that he upholds an organic growth towards a higher union rather than anything that would make for a looser bond or alliance. He supports Mr. Chamberlain and others who have long maintained that the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, in its relations to the self-governing dominions of the Crown, is but a trustee of powers, which it should exercise in accordance with the declared will of those communities. Just as great changes have taken place in regard to the relations of the British Parliament towards the Crown and Lords, so will still greater alterations come about in its attitude towards the younger legislatures of the Empire. Whereas once they were subordinate in all ways to the institution which has its location at Westminster; now they are fast being recognised as co-ordinate with it in power and privilege. In the growth of the Imperial Conferences Mr. Haldane believes that there may be opened a way which will lead to the constitution of a body capable of directing a guiding influence upon the Imperial aspect of the legislations of the various Parliaments under the one Crown. But according to Mr. Jebb, before the states of Empire attain to the full consciousness of an Imperial partnership, their nationalism must receive due acknowledgment, and their position as nations, with the sovereign right to act upon their own responsibility in foreign affairs in the last resort, must be used as the working basis of an alliance. Now, this brings us to the two main difficulties which all

Imperialists are called on to face, whether they be of Mr. Jebb's convictions or whether they hold more closely to the federative principle. These obstacles to a final unity, though classed as two, are really but aspects of the one underlying difficulty—the right way to recognise adequately the new spirit of nationalism in Imperial affairs. To this spirit (a) the power of veto exercisable by the Parliament at Westminster is altogether irksome; and (b) at the same time it is greatly perturbed by the fact that it has no direct representation in regard to the control of foreign relations. The question faces us—*are these difficulties lasting? Will they continue to remain unsolved?* At all events, as compared with past relations, changes have taken place, and are likely to increase. The attitude assumed towards the larger dominions is not what it once was, and even in foreign policy there is a growing desire to consult the interests of Canada and Australia in these matters. Further modifications may be readily anticipated as the sister states augment their prestige. Whatever form the final union of the states of Empire may take, there must still be a principle of restraint in operation somewhere. Every unity implies a centre of control, and from what point shall this constraint display itself? At present it seems best to abide the development of the closer relations which are obtaining between the Government of the United Kingdom and those of the Dominions for here is the most likely place from which all those powers of direction may be efficiently and equably carried out. In the exercise of restraints there must be felt the concentrated weight of the authorities of all the parts of the whole. If in foreign relations the Empire must always effect a united front, each of its parts should play a full share in the determination of any such policy. It is not yet easy to see how this can be guaranteed with equal justice to all concerned, but certainly one step towards its fulfilment would lie in causing foreign nations to respect the independent position of the self-governing dominions in their dealings with them, and not play them off against the powers which reside in the trusteeship of the British Ministers. This would occasion more direct intercourse by foreign nations with those parts of the Empire immediately concerned in the particular questions at issue, but any final decision in matters involving the prestige of the whole Empire should come from an executive body which controlled and voiced the aspirations of all those enjoying a common Imperial heritage. Here, then, we find the principles of alliance and federation working apparently side by side, but under distinct modifications. Indeed, a due regard to the nationalism

of the dominions is not necessarily opposed to the federal tendency, nor is a recognition of the principle of federation exclusive of some modified operation of those influences which desire for their free course a form of Imperial alliance. But the separate realisation of either would make for the disintegration of the whole. Alliance by itself will not do. It tends towards ultimate isolation of the parts through the clashing of self-interests which only an inward bond could overcome. The federal principle, in the form of an Imperial Parliament or Council, dominating and controlling the whole, would break down of its own weight, or rather would prove so cumbersome in the working out of it that the states would not sanction it at all.

While both of those principles taken by themselves prove most inefficient for the express purpose of bodying forth the unity that holds the Empire together, still they must both find a place in any consummate form of union that will allow for the full and free development of all the parts constituting the one supreme whole. The fact that there must be a unitary principle operating as a whole through each and all of the separate parts prepares a way for an adequate representation of federative tendencies, and these tendencies must involve the sacrifices which the various states are called on to make in order to preserve their union intact. Only by the working of the federal principle within the Empire will the states find themselves able to endure the strain that their local differences place upon them in the discussion of questions of Imperial moment. These very divergencies in policy must be loyally respected, for they make for the advancement of the national aspirations of the component parts. It is in the heed paid to these numerous national distinctions that we find reference to the idea of alliance as an operating principle of Imperial unity. Just as the federal form tends very largely to overlook the differences between the dominions, and work itself out in a modified unification, so alliance tends to forget the internal forces which constitute the unity, and lays undue stress upon the differences which it endeavours to compromise by an external policy dictated at the call of circumstance.

But the supreme fact is, we are one people, with one destiny, and in that faith we are bound by ties stronger than all material interests. So also our representatives maintained when they defended Australia's loyalty to the Imperial ideal—"The consciousness of kinship, the consciousness of a common blood, and a common sense of duty, the pride of race and history, these are the links of Empire, bonds which attach, not bonds which chafe."

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